

The Effectual Application of Christ to the Soul by John Flavel (1627-1691)

1 Cor. 1:30

I. Introduction and the Text

A. “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” (1 Cor. 1:30)

1. He that enquires what is the just value and worth of Christ, asks a question which puts all the men on earth, and angels in heaven, to an everlasting perplexity.
 - a) The highest attainment of our knowledge in this life, is to know, that Christ and his love pass knowledge, (Eph. 3:19).
 - b) But how excellent Christ is in himself, what treasures of righteousness lie in his blood, and whatever joy, peace, and ravishing comforts, spring up to men out of his incarnation, humiliation, and exaltation, they all give down their distinct benefits and comforts to them, in the way of effectual application.
 - c) For never was any wound healed by a prepared, but unapplied medicine.
 - (1) *No one was ever warmed by the most costly garment made, but not put on.*
 - (2) *There was never any heart refreshed and comforted by the richest medicinal compounded, but not received.*
 - (3) *Nor from the beginning of the world was it ever known, that a poor deceived, condemned, polluted, miserable sinner, was actually delivered out of that woeful state, until of God, Christ was made to him, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*
 - d) For look as the condemnation of the first Adam does not pass to us, except (as by generation) we are his; so grace and remission pass not from the second Adam to us, except (as by regeneration) we are his.
 - (1) *Adam’s sin hurts none but those that are in him.*
 - (2) *And Christ’s blood profits none but those that are in him.*
 - (3) *How great a weight therefore does there hang upon the effectual application of Christ to the souls of men!*
 - (a) *And what is there in the whole world so awfully solemn, so greatly important, as this is!*
 - (4) *Such is the strong consolation resulting from it, that the apostle, in this context, offers it to the believing Corinthians, as a superabundant recompence for the despicable meanness, and baseness of their outward condition in this world, of which he had just before spoken in verses 27-28, telling them, though the world condemned them as vile, foolish, and weak, yet “of God Christ is made unto them wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.”*
2. In these words we have an enumeration of the chief privileges of believers, and an account of the method by which they come to be invested with them.
 - a) First, their privileges are enumerated, namely, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, mercies of inestimable value in themselves, and such as respect a fourfold misery lying on sinful man, *viz.* ignorance, guilt, pollution, and the whole train of miserable consequences and effects, let in on the nature of men, yes, the best and holiest of men, by sin.

- b) Lapsed man is not only deep in misery, but grossly ignorant, both that he is so, and how to recover himself from it.
- c) Sin has left him at once senseless of his state, and at a perfect loss about the true remedy.
- d) To cure this, Christ is made to him wisdom, not only by improvement of those treasures of wisdom that are in himself; for the benefit of such souls as are united to him, as an head, consulting the good of his own members; but also, by imparting his wisdom to them by the Spirit of illumination, by which they come to discern both their sin and danger; as also the true way of their recovery from both, through the application of Christ to their souls by faith.
- e) But alas! Simple illumination does but increase our burden, and exasperate our misery as long as sin in the guilt of it is either imputed to our persons unto condemnation, or reflected by our consciences in a way of accusation.
- f) With design to remedy and heal this sore evil, Christ is made of God to us righteousness, complete and perfect righteousness, by which our obligation to punishment is dissolved, and by it a solid foundation for a well-settled peace of conscience is firmly established.
- (1) *Yes, but although removing guilt from our persons and consciences is an inestimable mercy, yet alone it cannot make us completely happy.*
- (2) *For though a man should never be damned for sin, yet what is it less than hell upon earth, to be under the dominion and pollution of every base lust?*
- (3) *It is misery enough to be daily defiled by sin, though a man should never be damned for it.*
- g) To complete the happiness of the redeemed Christ is not only made of God to them wisdom and righteousness, the one curing our ignorance, the other our guilt; but he is made sanctification also, to relieve us against the dominion and pollutions of our corruptions.
- (1) *“He comes both by water and by blood, not by blood only, but by water also,” I John 5:6, purging as well as pardoning.*
- (2) *How complete and perfect a cure is Christ!*
- h) But yet something is required beyond all this to make our happiness perfect and entire lacking nothing; and that is the removal of those miserable effects and consequences of sin, which (not withstanding all the fore-mentioned privileges and mercies) still lie on the souls and bodies of illuminated, justified, and sanctified people.
- i) For even with the best and holiest of men, what swarms of vanity, loads of deadness, and fits of unbelief, do daily appear in, and oppress their souls! to the embittering of all the comforts of life to them?
- (1) *And how many diseases, deformities, and pains oppress their bodies, which daily press them, until they fall into the grave by death, even as the bodies of other men do, who never received such privileges from Christ as they do?*
- (2) *For if “Christ be in us (as the apostle speaks, Rom. 8:10) the body is dead, because of sin,”*
- (a) *Sanctification does not exempt us from mortality.*
- j) But from all these, and whatsoever else, the fruits and consequences of sin, Christ is also the redemption to his people.
- (1) *This seals up the sum of mercies.*
- (a) *This so completes the happiness of the saints, that it leaves nothing to desire.*

(2) *These four, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, take in all that is necessary or desirable, to make a soul truly and perfectly blessed.*

3. Secondly, we have here the method and way, by which the elect come to be invested with these excellent privileges.

a) The account of this the apostle gives us in these words, “Who of God is made unto us,” in which expression, four things are remarkable.

b) First, that Christ and his benefits go inseparably and undividedly together.

(1) *It is Christ himself who is made all this unto us. we can have no saving benefit separate and apart from the person of Christ.*

(2) *Many would willingly receive his privileges, who will not receive his person; but it cannot be; if we will have one, we must take the other too.*

(3) *Yes, we must accept his person first, and then his benefits. as it is in the marriage covenant, so it is here.*

c) Secondly, that Christ with his benefits must be personally and particularly applied to us, before we can receive any actual, saving privilege by him; he must be “made unto us” *i.e.* particularly applied to us, as a sum of money becomes, or is made the ransom and liberty of a captive, when it is not only promised, but paid down in his name, and legally applied for that use and end.

(1) *When Christ died, the ransom was prepared, the sum laid down; but yet the elect continues until in sin and misery, notwithstanding, until by effectual calling it be actually applied to their persons, and then they are made free, Rom. 5:10-11, reconciled by Christ's death, by whom “we have now received the atonement”.*

d) Thirdly, that this application of Christ is the work of God, and not of man.

(1) *“Of God he is made unto us.”*

(2) *The same hand that prepared it, must also apply it, or else we perish, notwithstanding all that the Father has done in contriving, and appointing, and all that the Son has done in executing, and accomplishing the design thus far.*

(3) *And this actual application is the work of the Spirit, by a singular appropriation.*

e) Fourthly and lastly, this expression imports the suitability of Christ, to the necessities of sinners; what they want, he is made to them.

f) Indeed, as money answers all things, and is convertible into meat, drink, clothes, medicine, or what else our bodily necessities require, so Christ is virtually, and eminently all that the necessities of our souls require; bread to the hungry, and clothing to the naked soul.

(1) *In a word, God prepared and furnished him on purpose to answer all our wants, which fully suits the apostle's sense, when he saith, “Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.”*

(2) *The sum of all this is the doctrine.*

II. The Doctrine from the Text

A. Doctrine: That the Lord Jesus Christ, with all his precious benefits, becomes ours, by God's special and effectual application.

1. There is a twofold application of our redemption, one primary, the other Secondary.

a) The former is the act of God the Father, applying it to Christ our surety, and virtually to us in him. the latter is the act of the Holy Spirit, personally and actually applying it to us in the world of conversion.

- b) The former has the respect and relation of an example, model, or pattern to this; and this is produced and worked by its virtue.
- c) What was done on the person of Christ, was not only virtually done on us, considered in him as a common public representative person, in which sense, we are said to die with him, and live with him, to be crucified with him, and buried with him, but it was also intended for a platform, or idea, of what is to be done by the Spirit, actually on our souls and bodies, in our single persons.
- d) As he died for sin, so the Spirit applying his death to us in the work of mortification, causes us to die to sin, by the virtue of his death.
- e) And as he was quickened by the Spirit, and raised unto life, so the Spirit applying to us the life of Christ, causes us to live, by spiritual vivification.
- f) Now this personal, secondary, and actual application of redemption to us by the Spirit, in his sanctifying work, is that which I am engaged here to discuss and open; which I shall do in these following propositions.

B. Proposition I:

1. The application of Christ to us, is not only comprehensive of our justification, but of all these works of the Spirit which are known to us in scripture by the names of regeneration, vocation, sanctification, and conversion.
 2. Though all these terms have some small respective differences among themselves, yet they are all included in this in general, the applying and putting on of Christ, Rom. 13:14, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."
 - a) Regeneration expresses those supernatural, divine, new qualities, infused by the Spirit into the soul, which are the principles of all holy actions.
 - b) Vocation expresses the terms from which, and to which, the soul moves, when the Spirit works savingly on it, under the gospel call.
 - c) Sanctification notes a holy dedication of heart and life to God.
 - (1) *Our becoming the temples of the living, God, separate from all profane sinful practices, to the Lord's only use and service.*
 - d) Conversion denotes the great change itself, which the Spirit causes on the soul, turning it by a sweet irresistible efficacy from the power of sin and Satan, to God in Christ.
 - (1) *Now all these are imported in, and done by the application of Christ to our souls.*
 - (2) *For when once the efficacy of Christ's death, and the virtue of his resurrection, come to take place on the heart of any man, he cannot but turn from sin to God, and become a new creature, living and acting by new principles and rules.*
 - (3) *So the apostle observes, 1 Thess. 1:5-6, speaking of the effect of this work of the Spirit upon that people, "Our gospel (he says) came not to you in word only, but in power; and in the Holy Ghost:"*
 - (a) *There was the effectual application of Christ to them.*
 - (b) *"And you became followers of us, and of the Lord," ver. 6.*
 - (c) *There was their effectual call.*
 - (d) *"And ye turned from dumb idols to serve the living and true God, ver. 9.*
 - (e) *There was their conversion.*
 - (f) *"So that ye were ensamples to all that believe," ver. 9.*
 - (g) *There was their life of sanctification or dedication to God.*
- (i) So that all these are comprehended in effectual application.**

C. Proposition 2.

1. The application of Christ to the souls of men is that great project and design of God in this world, for the accomplishment of which all the ordinances and all the officers of the gospel are appointed and continued in the world.

a) This the gospel expressly declared to be its direct end, and the great business of all its officers, Eph. 4:11-12.

(1) *“And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; until we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God; to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,” i.e. the great aim and scope at all Christ’s ordinances and officers, are to bring men into union with Christ, and so build them up to perfection in him; or to unite them to, and confirm them in Christ.*

(2) *And when it shall have finished this design, then shall the whole frame of gospel-ordinances be taken down, and all its officers disbanded.*

(a) *“The kingdom (i.e. this present economy, manner, and form of government) shall be delivered up,” (1 Cor. 15:24).*

(b) *What are ministers, but the bridegroom’s friends, ambassadors for God, to beseech men to be reconciled?*

(c) *When all the elect are brought home in a reconciled state in Christ, when the marriage of the Lamb is come, our work and office expire together.*

D. Proposition 3.

1. Such is the importance and great concernment of the personal application of Christ to us by the Spirit, that whatever the Father has done in the planning, or the Son has done in the accomplishment of our redemption, is all unavailable and ineffectual to our salvation without this.

a) It is confessedly true, that God’s good pleasure appointing us from eternity to salvation, is, in its kind, a most full and sufficient impulsive cause of our salvation, and every way able (for so much as it is concerned) to produce its effect.

b) And Christ’s humiliation and sufferings are a most complete and sufficient meritorious cause of our salvation, to which nothing can be added to make it more apt, and able to procure our salvation, than it already is.

c) Yet neither the one nor the other can actually save any soul, without the Spirit’s application of Christ to it; for where there are diverse social causes necessary to produce one effect, there the effect cannot be produced until the last cause has worked.

(1) *So it is here, the Father has elected, and the Son has redeemed; but until the Spirit (who is the last cause) has worked his part also, we cannot be saved.*

(2) *For he comes in the Father’s and in the Son’s name and authority, to put the last hand to the work of our salvation, by bringing all the fruits of election and redemption home to our souls in this work at effectual vocation.*

(3) *1 Peter 1:2, noting the order of causes in their operations, for the bringing about of our salvation, in this way states it, “elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”*

(a) *Here you find God’s election and Christ’s blood, the two great causes of salvation, and yet neither of these alone, nor both together can save us.*

d) There must be added the sanctification of the Spirit, by which God's decree is executed; and the sprinkling (*i.e.* the personal application of Christ's blood) as well as its shedding, before we can have the saving benefit of either of the former causes.

E. Proposition 4.

1. The application of Christ, with his saving benefits, is exactly of the same extent and latitude with the Father's election, and the Son's intention in dying, and cannot possibly be extended to one soul further.
 - a) "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called," (Rom. 8:30) and Acts 13:48, "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed."
 - b) 2 Tim. 1:9, "Who has saved and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Jesus Christ, before the foundation of the world."
 - c) The Father, Son, and Spirit, (between whom was the council of peace) work out their design in a perfect harmony and consent.
 - d) As there was no shakiness in their council, so there can be none in its execution.
 - (1) *Those whom the Father, before all time, did choose; they, and they only, are the people, whom the Son, when the fulness of time for the execution of that decree was come, died for, John 17:6, "I have manifested thy name unto the men, which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me;" and ver. 19. "For their sakes I sanctify myself;" i.e. consecrate, devote, or set myself apart for a sacrifice for them.*
 - e) And those for whom Christ died, are the people to whom the Spirit effectually applies the benefits and purchases of his blood.
 - (1) *He comes in the name of the Father and Son.*
 - (2) *"But the world cannot receive him, for it neither sees, nor knows him," (John 14:17).*
 - (3) *"They that are not of Christ's sheep, believe not," (John 10:26).*
 - (a) *Christ has indeed a fulness of saving power, but its dispensation is limited by the Father's will; therefore he tells us, Matt. 20:23, "It is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."*
 - (b) *In which words he in no way denies his authority, to give glory as well as grace; he only shows that in the dispensation proper to him, as Mediator, he was limited by his Father's will and counsel.*
2. And in this way also are the dispensations of grace by the Spirit, in the same manner, limited, both by the counsel and will of the Father and Son.
 - a) For as he proceeds from them, so he acts in the administration proper to him, by commission from both.
 - b) John 14:26, "The Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name."
 - (1) *And as he comes forth into the world by this joint commission, so his dispensations are limited in his commission; for it is said, John 16:13, "He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak," i.e. he shall in all things act according to his commission, which the Father and I have given him.*
 - c) The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do, (John 5:19).
 - d) And the Spirit can do nothing of himself; but what he hears from the Father and Son; and it is impossible it should be otherwise, considering not only the unity of their nature, but also of their will and design.

(1) So that you see the application of Christ, and benefits by the Spirit, are commensurable with the Father's secret counsel, and the Son's design in dying, which are the rule, model, and pattern of the Spirit's working.

F. Proposition 5.

1. The application of Christ to souls, by the regenerating work of the Spirit, is that which makes the first internal difference and distinction among men.

a) It is very true, that in respect of God's fore-knowledge and purpose, there was a distinction between one man and another, before any man had a being, one was taken, another left.

(1) And with respect to the death of Christ, there is a great difference between one and another; he laid down his life for the sheep, he prayed for them, and not for the world; but all this while, as to any relative change of state, or real change of temper, they are upon a level with the rest of the miserable world.

b) The elect themselves are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others," (Eph. 2:3).

c) And to the same purpose the apostle tells the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 6:11 (when he had given in that black bill, describing the most lewd, profligate, abominable wretches in the world, men whose practices did stink in the very nostrils of nature, and were able to make the more sober heathens blush; after this he tells the Corinthians) "And such were some of you, but ye are washed," etc.

(1) In other words, look, these were your companions once, as they are, you lately were.

2. The work of the Spirit does not only give evidence and manifest that difference which God's election has made between man and man, as the apostle speaks, 1 Thess. 1:4-5.

a) But it also makes a twofold difference itself; namely in state and temper, by which they visibly differ, not only from other men, but also from themselves; after this work, though a man be the "who", yet not the "what" he was.

b) This work of the Spirit makes us new creatures, namely; for quality and temper, 2 Cor. 5:17.

(1) "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are past away, behold, all things are become new."

G. Proposition 6.

1. The application of Christ, by the work of regeneration, is that which yield to men all the sensible sweetness and refreshing comforts that they have in Christ, and in all that he has done, suffered, or purchased for sinners.

a) An unsanctified person may relish the natural sweetness of the creature, as well as he that is sanctified; he may also seem to relish and taste some sweetness in the delicious promises and discoveries of the gospel, by a misapplication of them to himself.

b) For the rational, solid, and genuine delights and comforts of religion, no man tastes them, until this work of the Spirit has first passed on his soul.

(1) It is an enclosed pleasure, a stranger does not intermeddle with it.

(a) "The white stone, and the new name," (denoting the pleasant results and fruits of justification and adoption) "no man knows but he that receives it," (Rev. 2:7).

(2) There are all those cruel things, in the unsanctified (though elect) soul, that should capacitate and enable it to relish the sweetness of Christ and religion, namely, propriety, evidence, and suitableness of spirit.

- (3) *Propriety is the sweetest part of any excellency; Luther was accustomed to say, that the sweetness of the gospel lay mostly in pronouns, as me, my, thy, etc., who loved [me] and gave himself for me, (Gal. 2:20).*
- (4) *Christ Jesus [my] Lord, Phil. 3:18.*
 (a) *So Matt. 9:2, "Son, be of good cheer, [thy] sins are forgiven."*
- (5) *Take away propriety, and you deflower the very gospel of its beauty and deliciousness.*
- (6) *And as propriety, so evidence is requisite to joy and comfort; Yes, so necessary, that even interest and propriety afford no sensible sweetness without it.*
 (a) *If I am registered in the book of life, and do not know it, what comfort can my name there afford me?*
 (b) *Besides, to capacitate a soul for the sweetness and comfort of Christ there is also an agreeable temper of spirit required; for how can Christ be sweet to that man's soul, whose thoughts decline, or nauseate so holy and pure an object?*
 (c) *Now, all these requisites being the proper effects and fruits of the Spirit's sanctifying operations upon us, it is beyond controversy, that the consolations of Christ cannot be tasted, until the application of Christ be first made.*

H. Proposition 7.

1. The application of Christ to the soul effectually, though it is so far worked in the first saving work of the Spirit, as truly to unite the soul to Christ, and save it from the danger of perishing; yet it is a work gradually advancing in the believer's soul, whilst it abides on this side heaven and glory.
 - a) It is true, indeed, that Christ is perfectly and completely applied to the soul in the first act for righteousness.
 - b) Justification being a relative change, properly admits no degrees, but is perfected together, and at once, in one only act; though as to its manifestation, sense, and effects, it has various degrees.
 - (1) *But the application of Christ to us, for wisdom and sanctification, is not perfected in one single act, but rises by many, and slow degrees to its just perfection.*
 - (2) *And thought we are truly said to be come to Christ when we first believe, John 6:35 yet the soul after that is until coming to him by farther acts of faith, 1 Peter 2:4.*
 (a) *"To whom [coming] as unto a living stone;" the participle notes a continued motion, by which the soul gains ground, and until gets nearer and nearer to Christ; growing until more inwardly acquainted with him.*
 - (3) *The knowledge of Christ grows upon the soul as the morning light, from its first spring to the perfect day, Prov. 4:18.*
 - c) Every grace of the Spirit grows, if not sensibly, yet really.
 - (1) *For it is in discerning the growth of sanctification, as it is in discerning the growth of plants, which we perceive rather to have grown, rather than grow.*
 - (2) *And as it thrives in the soul and more promptitude and spirituality in the acting; so Christ, and the soul proportionally, close more and more inwardly and efficaciously, until at last it is wholly swallowed up in Christ's full and perfect enjoyment.*

I. Proposition 8.

1. Lastly, Although the several privileges and benefits before mentioned are all true and really bestowed with Christ upon believers, yet they are not communicated to them in one and the same day and manner; but differently and divers, as their respective natures require.

2. These four illustrious benefits are conveyed from Christ to us in three different ways and methods; his righteousness is made ours by imputation.

a) His wisdom and sanctification by renovation, and his redemption by our glorification.

b) That if God imputes Christ's righteousness to the believer, and accepts what Christ has performed for him, as if he had performed it himself; then we may be accounted as righteous as Christ.

3. When we say the righteousness of Christ is made ours by imputation, we do not think that it is made ours according to its universal value, but according to our particular necessity.

a) Not to make others righteous, but to make us so.

b) Not that we have the formal intrinsical righteousness of Christ in us, as it is in him, but a relative righteousness, which makes us righteous, even as he is righteous; not as to the quantity, but as to its truth.

c) Nor is it imputed to us, as though Christ designed to make us the causes of salvation to others, but the subjects of salvation, ourselves;" it is inhesively in him, communicatively it becomes ours, by imputation, the sin of the first Adam becomes ours, and the same way the righteousness of the second Adam becomes ours, Rom. 5:17.

(1) This way the Redeemer became sin for us, and this way we are made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. 5:21.

(2) This way Abraham the father of believers was justified, therefore this way all believers, the children of Abraham, must be justified also, Rom. 4:22-23.

(3) And in this way is Christ's righteousness made ours.

4. But in conveying, and communicating his wisdom and sanctification, he takes another method, for this is not imputed, but really imparted to us by the illuminating and regenerating work of the Spirit.

a) These are graces really inherent in us.

b) Our righteousness comes from Christ as a surety but our holiness comes from him as a quickening head, sending vital influences unto all his members.

c) Now these gracious habits being subjected and seated in the souls of poor imperfect creatures, whose corruptions abide and work in the very same faculties where grace has its residence; it cannot be, that our sanctification should be so perfect and complete, as our justification is, which inheres only in Christ (Gal. 5:17).

(1) In this way are righteousness and sanctification communicated and made ours, but then,

(a) For redemption, that is to say, absolute and plenary deliverance from all the sad remains, effects, and consequences of sin, both upon soul and body; this is made ours, (or, to keep to the terms) Christ is made redemption to us by glorification; then, and not before, are these miserable effects removed; we put off these together with the body.

(b) So that look, as justification cures the guilt of sin, and sanctification the dominion of sin, so glorification removes, together with its existence and being, all those miseries which it let in (as at a flood-gate) upon our whole man, Eph. 5:26-27.

(2) And in this way of God, Christ is made to us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption; namely, by imputation, regeneration, and glorification.

III. The Application of the Text

A. Useful Inferences

1. Inference 1.

- a) Learn from here, what a naked, destitute, and empty thing, a poor sinner is, in his natural unregenerate state.
- b) He is one that naturally and inherently has neither wisdom, nor righteousness, sanctification nor redemption; all these must come from without himself, even from Christ, who is made all this to a sinner, or else he must eternally perish.
- c) As no creature (in respect of external abilities) comes under more natural weakness into the world than man, naked, empty, and more shiftless and helpless than any other creature; so it is with his soul, Yes, much more than so.
- d) All our excellencies are borrowed excellencies, no reason therefore to be proud of any of them, 1 Cor. 4:7.

(1) "What hast thou that thou hast not received? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

(a) That intolerable insolence and vanity would it be for a man that wears the rich and costly robe of Christ's righteousness, in which there is not one thread of his own spinning, but all made by free-grace, and not by free-will, to jet proudly up and down the world in it, as if himself had made it, and he were beholden to none for it?

(b) O man! Your excellencies, whatever they are, are borrowed from Christ, they oblige you to him, but he can be no more obliged to you, who wears them, than the sun is obliged to him that borrows its light, or the fountain to him that draws its water for his use and benefit.

(2) In this way holy Paul, viewing the principles of divine life in himself, (the richest gift bestowed on man in this world by Jesus Christ) how does he renounce himself, and deny the least part of the praise and glory as belonging to him.

(a) Gal. 2:20, "Now I live, yet not I; but Christ liveth in me", and this for the best duties that ever he performed for God.

(b) And what mere man ever did more for God?

(c) Yet when, in a just and necessary defense, he was constrained to mention them, 1 Cor. 15:10.

- e) Well then, let the sense of your own emptiness by nature humble and oblige you the more to Christ, from whom you receive all you have.

2. Inference 2.

- a) We are informed, that none can claim benefit by imputed righteousness, but those only that live in the power of inherent holiness; to whomsoever Christ was made righteousness, to him he also was made sanctification.

- b) The gospel has not the least favor for licentiousness.

(1) It is every way as careful to press men to their duties as to instruct them in their privileges.

(a) *Titus 3:8, "This is a faithful saying; and these things I will that ye affirm constantly; that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works."*

(b) *It is a loose principle, divulged by libertines, to the reproach of Christ and his gospel, that sanctification is not the evidence of our justification.*

c) And Christ is as much wronged by them who separate holiness from righteousness (as if a sensual vile life were consistent with a justified state) as he is in the contrary extreme, by those who confound Christ's righteousness with man's holiness, in the point of justification; or that own no other righteousness, but what is inherent in themselves.

(1) *The former opinion makes him a cloak for sin, the latter a needless sacrifice for sin.*

d) It is true, our sanctification cannot justify us before God; but what then, can it not evidence our justification before men?

(1) *Is there no necessity, or use for holiness, because it has no hand in our justification?*

(2) *Is the preparation of the soul for heaven, by altering its frame and temper, nothing?*

(3) *Is the glorifying of our Redeemer, by the exercises of grace in the world, nothing?*

(4) *Does the work of Christ render the work of the Spirit needless? God forbid.*

(a) *"He came not by blood only, but by water also," (1 John 5:6).*

(b) *Rom. 4:5, "But unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness", its scope is neither to characterize and describe the justified person, as one that is lazy and slothful, and has no mind to work, nor the rebellious and refractory, refusing obedience to the commands of God; but to represent him as an humbled sinner, who is convinced of his inability to work out his own righteousness by the law, and sees all his endeavors to obey the law fall short of righteousness, and therefore is said, in a law-sense, not to work, because he does not work so as to answer the purpose and end of the law, which accepts of nothing beneath perfect obedience.*

e) And when (in the same text) the ungodly are said to be justified, that character does not describe the temper and frame of their hearts and lives, after their justification, but what it was before; not as it leaves, but as it found them.

3. Inference 3.

a) How unreasonable, and worse than brutish, is the sin of infidelity, by which the sinner rejects Christ, and with him all those mercies, and benefits, which alone can relieve and cure his misery!

b) He is by nature blind and ignorant, and yet refuses Christ, who comes to him with heavenly light and wisdom, he is condemned by the terrible sentence of the law to eternal wrath, and yet rejects Christ, who renders to him complete and perfect righteousness.

c) He is wholly polluted and plunged into original and actual pollution of nature and practice, yet will have none of Christ, who would become sanctification to him.

d) He is oppressed in soul and body, with the deplorable effects and miseries sin has brought upon him, and yet is so in love with his bondage, that he will neither accept Christ, nor the redemption he brings with him to sinners.

- (1) *O! what monsters, what beasts has sin turned its subjects into!*
- (2) *“You will not come to me that ye may have life,” John 5:40.*
 (a) *Sin has stabbed the sinner to the heart, the wounds are all mortal, eternal death is in his face; Christ has prepared the only medicine that can cure his wounds, but he will not suffer him to apply it.*
 (b) *So that in two things the unbeliever shows himself worse than brutish, he cannot think of damnation, the effect of sin, without horror; and cannot yet think of sin, the cause of damnation, without pleasure; he is loath to perish to all eternity without a remedy, and yet refuses and declines Christ as if he were an enemy, who only can and would deliver him from that eternal perdition.*
- (3) *How do men act therefore, as if they were in love with their own ruin!*
- (4) *Many poor wretches now in the way to hell, what a hard shift do they make to cast themselves away!*
- (5) *Christ meets them many times in the ordinances, where they studiously shun him.*
- (6) *Many times it checks them in their way by convictions, which they make a hard shift to overcome and conquer.*
 (a) *Oh how willing are they to accept a cure, a benefit, a remedy, for any thing but their souls!*
 (b) *You see then that sinners cannot, (should they study all their days to do themselves a mischief), take a more ready course to undo themselves, than by rejecting Christ in his gracious offers.*
 (c) *Surely the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is less than this sin.*
 (d) *Mercy itself is exasperated by it, and the damnation of such as reject Christ, (so prepared for them, with whatever they need, and so seriously and frequently offered to them upon the knee of gospel entreaty), is just, inevitable, and will be more intolerable than to any in the world beside them.*
 (i) *It is just, for the sinner has but his own option, or choice.*
 (ii) *He is but come to the end which he was often told his way would bring him to.*
 (e) *It is inevitable, for there is no other way to salvation, but that which is rejected.*
 (i) *And it will be more intolerable than the damnation of others, because neither heathens nor devils ever aggravated their sins by such a horrid circumstance, as the willful refusing of such an apt, offered, and only remedy.*

4. Inference 4.

- a) What a tremendous symptom of wrath, and sad character of death, appears on that man's soul, to which no effectual application of Christ can be made by the gospel.
- b) Christ, with his benefits, is frequently tendered to them in the gospel; they have been requested once and again, on the knee of importunity, to receive him; those entreaties and persuasions have been urged by the greatest arguments, the command of God, the love of Christ, the inconceivable happiness or misery which unavoidably follow the accepting or rejecting of those offers, and yet nothing will affect them.
- c) All their pleas for infidelity have been over and over confuted, their reasons and consciences have stood convinced, they have been speechless, as well as Christless.
- d) Not one sound argument is found with them to defend their infidelity.

- (1) *They confess in general, that such courses as theirs are, lead to destruction.*
- (2) *They will yield them to be happy souls that are in Christ; and yet, when it comes to the point, their own closing with him, nothing will do; all arguments, all entreaties, return to us without success.*
 - (a) *Lord! what is the reason of this unaccountable obstinacy?*
- (3) *In other things it is not so.*
 - (a) *If they are sick, they are so far from rejecting a physician that offers himself, that they will send, and pray, and pay him too.*
 - (b) *If they are arrested for debt, and anyone will be a surety, and pay their debts for them, words can hardly express the sense they have of such a kindness.*
 - (c) *But though Christ would be both a physician and surety, and whatever else their needs require, they will rather perish to eternity, than accept him.*
 - (d) *What may we fear to be the reason of this, but because they are not of Christ's sheep, (John 10:26).*
 - (e) *The Lord open the eyes of poor sinners, to apprehend not only how great a sin, but how dreadful a sign this is.*

5. Inference 5.

- a) If Christ, with all his benefits, is made ours, by God's special application, what a day of mercies then is the day of conversion!
 - (1) *What multitudes of choice blessings visit the converted soul in that day!*
 - (2) *"This day (Christ says to Zacchaeus, Luke 19:9) is salvation come to this house."*
 - (3) *In this day, Christ comes into the soul, and he does not come empty, but brings with him all his treasures of wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*
 - (a) *Troops of mercies, Yes, of the best of mercies, come with him.*
 - (b) *It is a day of singular gladness and joy to the heart of Christ, when he is espoused to, and received by the believing soul.*
 - (c) *It is a coronation day to a king.*
 - (4) *So you read, Song of Songs 3:11, "Go forth, O ye daughters of Sion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart."*
 - (5) *Where, under the type of Solomon in his greatest magnificence and glory, when the royal diadem was set upon his head, and the people shouted for joy, so that the earth did ring again, is shadowed out the joy of Christ's heart, when poor souls, by their high estimation of him, and consent to his government, do, as it were, crown him with glory and honor, and make his heart glad.*
- b) Now, if the day of our espousals to Christ are the day of the gladness of his heart, and he reckons himself in this way honored and glorified by us, what a day of joy and gladness should it be to our hearts, and how should we be transported with joy, to see a King from heaven, with all his treasures of grace and glory, bestowing himself freely, and everlastingly upon us, as our portion!
 - (1) *No wonder Zacchaeus came down joyfully, Luke 19:6; that the eunuch went home rejoicing, Acts 8:39.*
 - (2) *That the jailer rejoiced, believing in God with all his household, Acts 16:34; that they that were converted, did eat their food with gladness, praising God, Acts 2:41, 46.*
 - (3) *That there was great joy among them at Samaria, when Christ came among them in the preaching of the gospel, Acts 8:5, 8.*

- (a) *I say, it is no wonder we read of such joy accompanying Christ into the soul, when we consider, that in one day, so many blessings meet together in it, the least of which is not to be exchanged for all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them.*
- (b) *Eternity itself will but suffice to bless God for the mercies of this one day.*

6. Inference 6.

- a) If Christ is made all this to every soul, to whom he is effectually applied, what cause then have those souls, that are under the preparatory work of the Spirit, and are come near to Christ and all his benefits, to stretch out their hands, with vehement desire to Christ, and give him the most important invitation into their souls!
- b) The whole world is distinguishable into three classes, or sorts of people; such as are far from Christ; such as are not far from Christ; and such as are in Christ.
- c) They that are in Christ have heartily received him.
- d) Such as are far from Christ, will not open to him; their hearts are barred fast by ignorance, prejudice, and unbelief against him.
- e) But those that have come under the preparatory workings of the Spirit, near to Christ, who see their own indispensable necessity of him, and his suitableness to their necessities, in whom also encouraging hopes begins to dawn, and their souls are waiting at the foot of God for power to receive him, for a heart to close sincerely and universally with him; O what vehement desires! what strong pleas! what moving arguments should such persons urge, and plead to win Christ, and get possession of him! they are in sight of their only remedy; Christ and salvation are come to their very doors; there lacks but a few things to make them blessed forever.
- (1) *This is the day in which their souls are exercised between hopes and fears.*
- (2) *Now they are much alone, and deep in thoughtfulness, they weep and make supplication for a heart to believe, and that against the great discouragements with which they encounter.*
- f) If this is the case of your soul, it will not be the least piece of service I can do for you, to suggest such pleas as in this case are proper to be urged for the attainment of your desires, and the closing of the match between Christ and you.
- (1) *First, plead the absolute necessity which now drives you to Christ.*
- (a) *Tell him your hope is utterly perished in all other refuges.*
- (b) *You have come like a starving beggar to the last door of hope.*
- (c) *Tell him you now begin to see the absolute necessity of Christ.*
- (d) *Your body has not so much need of bread, water, or air, as your soul has of Christ, and that wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that are in him.*
- (2) *Secondly, plead the Father's gracious design in furnishing and sending him into the world, and his own design in accepting the Father's call.*
- (a) *Lord Jesus, were you not "anointed to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, and to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound?" Isa. 61:1, 3.*
- (i) **Behold an object suitable to your office.**
- (b) *While I was ignorant of my condition, I have a proud rebellious heart, but conviction and self-acquaintance have now melted it.*

(c) My heart was harder than the nether millstone, and it was as easy to dissolve the obdurate rocks, as to thaw and melt my heart for sin; but now God has made my heart soft, I sensibly feel the misery of my condition.

(d) I once thought myself at perfect liberty, but now I see what I conceited to be perfect liberty, is perfect bondage; and never did a poor prisoner sigh for deliverance more than I.

(3) Since then you have given me a soul in this way qualified, though until unworthy, for the exercise of your office, and execution of your commission; Lord Jesus, be, according to your name, a Jesus to me.

g) Thirdly, Plead the unlimited and general invitation made to such souls as you are, to come to Christ freely.

(1) Lord, you have made open proclamations; "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, Is. 55:1 and Rev. 22:17, "Him that is a-thirst come."

(2) In obedience to your call, lo, I come; had I not been invited, my coming to you, dear Lord Jesus, had been an act of presumption, but this makes it an act of duty and obedience.

h) Fourthly, Plead the unprofitableness of your blood to God; Lord, there is no profit in my blood, it will turn to no more advantage to you to destroy, than it will to save me.

(1) If you send me to hell, (as the merit of my sin calls on your justice to do,) I shall be there dishonoring you to all eternity, and the debt I owe you never paid.

(2) But, if you apply your Christ to me for righteousness, satisfaction for all that I have done will be laid down in one full, complete sum; indeed, if the honor of your justice lay as a bar to my pardon, it would stop my mouth.

(3) But when your justice, as well as your mercy, shall both rejoice together, and be glorified and pleased in the same act, what hinders but that Christ be applied to my soul, since, in so doing, God can be no loser by it?

i) Fifthly, and lastly, Plead your compliance with the terms of the gospel.

(1) Tell him, Lord, my will complies fully and heartily to all your gracious terms, I can now subscribe to it.

(2) Let God offer his Christ on what terms he will, my heart is ready to comply; I have no exception against any article of the gospel.

(3) And now, Lord, I wholly refer myself to your pleasure; do with me what seems good in your eyes, only give me an interest in Jesus Christ; as to all other concerns I lie at thy feet, in full resignation of all to your pleasure.

(a) Never did anyone perish in that posture and frame; and I hope I shall not be made the first instance and example.

7. Inference 7.

a) Lastly, If Christ, with all his benefits, is made ours, by a special application; how contented, thankful, comfortable, and hopeful, should believers be, in every condition which God casts them into in this world!

(1) After such a mercy as this, let them never open their mouths any more to repine and grudge at the outward inconveniences of their condition in this world.

(a) What are the things you lack, compared with the things you enjoy?

(b) What is a little money, health, or liberty, to wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?

(c) All the crowns and scepters in the world, sold to their full value, are no price for the least of these mercies.

(d) But I will not insist here, your duty lies much higher than contentment.

- (2) *Be thankful, as well as content, in every state.*
- (a) *“Blessed be God, (the apostle says) the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all [spiritual blessings] in heavenly places in Christ.”*
 - (b) *O think what are men to angels, that Christ should pass by them to become a Savior to men? And what are you among men, that you should be taken, and others left!*
 - (c) *And among all the mercies of God, what mercies are comparable to these conferred upon you?*
 - (d) *O bless God in the lowest ebb of outward comforts, for such privileges as these.*
- (3) *And yet you will not come up to your duty in all this, except you be joyful in the Lord, and rejoice evermore after the receipt of such mercies as these, Phil. 4:4, “Rejoice in the Lord ye righteous, and again I say rejoice.”*
- (4) *For has not the poor captive reason to rejoice, when he has recovered his liberty?*
- (5) *The debtor to rejoice when all scores are cleared, and he owes nothing?*
- (6) *The weary traveler to rejoice, though he is not owner of a penny, when he is come almost home, where all his needs shall be supplied?*
- (7) *Why this is our case, when Christ once becomes yours.*
- (8) *You are the Lord’s freemen, your debts to justice are all satisfied by Christ; and you are within a little of complete redemption from all the troubles and inconveniences of your present state.*
- (a) *Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.*